

## Message Text

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S E C R E T CAIRO 1714

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, JO, PAL

SUBJECT: FAHMY ON SYRIA-JORDAN-PALESTINIANS

1. IN A LENGTHY TALK WITH FAHMY TODAY, I REFERRED TO KING HUSSEIN'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON RECONVENING THE JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT AND THE PLO REACTION THERETO. IN FAHMY'S VIEW, THIS ACTION ON THE PART OF HUSSEIN REPRESENTS THE FIRST STEP IN A GOJ EFFORT TO GET BACK INTO THE ME PEACE PROCESS AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT. NOTING TOTAL SYRIAN SILENCE ON HSSSEIN'S ACTION, FAHMY SPECULATED THE JORDANIAN DECISION COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN REACHED WITH ASAD'S APPROVAL.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, FAHMY ALSO ALLUDED TO ZUHAYR MUHSIN'S STATEMENT INDICATING THAT THE JORDANIAN ACTION WAS KNOWN TO PLO IN ADVANCE AND DOES NOT RUN COUNTER TO PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. SINCE ZUHAYR MUHSIN IS TOTALLY UNDER THE SYRIAN THUMB, FAHMY VIEWED THE SA'TQA LEADER'S STATEMENT AS FURTHER INDICATION OF PRIOR SYRIAN ENDORSEMENT. ZUHAYR MUHSIN, FAHMY CHARGED, IS MORE A SYRIAN THAN HE IS A PALESTINIAN.

3. FAHMY STATED GOE STRATEGY AT THE MOMENT IS TO USE THE QUOTE SYRIAN GAMBIT WITH THE PALESTINIANS UNQUOTE IN ORDER TO DIVIDE THE PALESTINIANS. ARAFAT AND FATAH ARE CURRENTLY

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DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT GROWING STRENGTH OF THE SYRIAN

ORIENTED SA'IQA AND VIEW ASAD'S OBJECTIVE AS SUPPLANTING ARAFAT WITH ZUHAYR MUHSIN AS LEADER OF THE PLO. THUS, GOE HAS BEEN DOING WHAT IT CAN TO ASSIST ARAFAT AND FATAH, INCLUDING THE RECENT DEPLOYMENT OF A BATTALION OF THE AIN JALLUT BRIGADE TO LEBANON AT ARAFAT'S SPECIFIC REQUEST. FAHMY ARGUED, AS HE HAS MANY TIMES BEFORE, THAT ONLY BY STRENGTHENING ARAFAT AND FATAH IS THERE ANY HOPE OF KEEPING THE PLO UNDER QUOTE MODERATE UNQUOTE LEADERSHIP.

4. FAHMY RECALLED THAT, WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE PLO'S SHARPLY NEGATIVE REACTION TO HUSSEIN'S MOVEMENT, HE HAD TOLD PRESS THAT GOE DISAPPROVES OF ANY MEASURE WHICH COULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE OR THE FUTURE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (CAIRO 1684). HIS STATEMENT, HE EXPLAINED, WAS MADE AS PART OF GOE EFFORT TO DIVIDE THE PALESTINIANS. WHILE NOT A DIRECT SLAP AT HUSSEIN, IT WOULD BE READ IN OVERALL ARAB CONTEXT AS A SLAP AT THE SYRIANS AND SUPPORT FOR ARAFAT.

5. THIS PROMPTED FAHMY TO COMMENT ON PRESS REPORTS OUT OF ISRAEL AND THE US AFTER RABIN'S VISIT THAT HUSSEIN WILL BE INVITED TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE PALESTINIANS. FAHMY STRESSED THAT NO ONE SHOULD BELIEVE HUSSEIN CAN DO SO AT THE PRESENT TIME. SADAT HAD ATTEMPTED SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AT ALEXANDRIA IN 1974, BUT IT FAILED. HUSSEIN MIGHT HAVE A ROLE, BUT ONLY AFTER ANOTHER ARAB SUMMIT ALTERS THE RABAT DECISION AND AUTHORIZES HIM TO DO SO. TO ATTEMPT TO BRING HUSSEIN IN AS A NEGOTIATOR FOR THE PALESTINIANS BEFORE THE RABAT DECISION IS AMENDED WILL, IN FAHMY'S VIEW, DEFEAT THE EFFORT BEFORE IT EVER GETS UNDERWAY. NEITHER HUSSEIN, NOR THE ISRAELIS NOR WE SHOULD BE UNDER ANY MIS-IMPRESSION ON THIS SCORE.

7. DEPT MAY WISH REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO DAMASCUS AND AMMAN.

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